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A64W (MCCONE)

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(700) NIGHT LEAD MCCONE

BY LEWIS HAWKINS

WASHINGTON, JAN. 18 (AP) - POWER OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND JOHN A. MCCONE'S FITNESS TO HEAD IT BOTH WERE QUESTIONED TODAY BUT A SENATE COMMITTEE GAVE INFORMAL APPROVAL TO MCCONE'S NOMINATION AS CIA DIRECTOR.

THE WEALTHY INDUSTRIALIST-ENGINEER ACTUALLY HAS BEEN RUNNING THE SUPER-SECRET AGENCY SINCE LAST NOVEMBER WHEN HE SUCCEEDED ALLEN DULLES UNDER AN INTERIM APPOINTMENT BY PRESIDENT KENNEDY.

DESPITE CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST CHALLENGES AND OTHER CRITICISMS DURING SEVERAL HOURS OF HEARINGS, IT WAS LEARNED LATE TODAY THAT A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY OF THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE WILL ENDORSE THE NOMINATION. A FORMAL VOTE WAS POSTPONED UNTIL MONDAY.

SENATE CONFIRMATION ALSO APPEARS TO BE A FOREGONE CONCLUSION SINCE MCCONE TWICE AS WON UNANIMOUS SENATE APPROVAL FOR FEDERAL POSTS -- IN 1950 AS DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE AND IN 1958 AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION.

NOB DID IT SEEM LIKELY THAT BIDS TO CLIP CIA'S NINES WOULD GET FAR.

CHALLENGING OF THE CALIFORNIA REPUBLICAN WAS BEGUN TODAY BY SEN. EUGENE J. McCARTHY, D-MINN., WHO APPEARED AS A WITNESS. HE IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE ARMED SERVICES GROUP. McCARTHY CHALLENGED MCCONE'S FITNESS TO HEAD AN ORGANIZATION WHICH THE MINNESOTAN SAID WIELDS SO MUCH POWER WITH SO LITTLE CONGRESSIONAL SUPERVISION THAT IT MIGHT LAND THIS NATION IN WAR.

MCCARTHY SAID THE CIA IS CREDITED "WITH HELPING OUST (MOHAMMED) MOSSADEGH FROM THE PREMIERSHIP OF IRAN IN 1953" AND HAS "TAKEN CREDIT FOR THE OVERTHROW OF DR. (JACOB) ARBENZ AS PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA IN 1954".

MCCARTHY HAS BEEN A LEADER OF PAST EFFORTS TO PUT CIA OPERATIONS UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY OF A JOINT SENATE-HOUSE COMMITTEE SUCH AS EXERCISING BROAD SUPERVISION OVER THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION. BUT CONGRESS SO FAR HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO GO THAT FAR IN CONTROLLING THE AGENCY WHICH IS SUCH A HUSH-HUSH OUTFIT THAT WHAT IT DOES, HOW MANY PERSONS IT EMPLOYS AND HOW MUCH IT SPENDS ALL ARE SECRET.

MCCONE TOOK THE STAND TO ASSURE THE COMMITTEE HE WOULD NOT TRY TO MAKE FOREIGN POLICY OR CARRY OUT ANY SECRET OPERATIONS WITHOUT APPROVAL OF THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE. HE ALSO DENIED ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST EXISTS BETWEEN HIS EXTENSIVE PROPERTY-HOLDING AND HIS DUTIES AS CIA DIRECTOR. HE AGREED TO FURNISH A LIST OF HIS FINANCIAL HOLDINGS.